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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 554  
By McDonald

A RESOLUTION To honor the pastor and the congregation of St. Luke African Methodist Episcopal Church on the occasion of their one hundred and thirty-fifth anniversary.

WHEREAS, It is appropriate that the members of this legislative body should recognize those esteemed religious institutions and their congregations, who through their unwavering commitment to service and faith in God, strive to enrich the lives of the people in their communities; and

WHEREAS, The good people of St. Luke African Methodist Episcopal Church comprise one such congregation, and this year they will be celebrating the Church's one hundred and thirty-fifth anniversary; and

WHEREAS, Founded during the days of slavery, St. Luke was first located at Gravel Hill, a small community also known as Sycamore, that lies near the county line of Sumner and Trousdale Counties; and

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WHEREAS, The deliberate efforts, faith, and hard work of the initial members, two of whom were Mr. John Whiteside and Mrs. Mittie Stewart, laid the foundation for the now thriving church; and

WHEREAS, In 1890, St. Luke African Methodist Episcopal Church moved from the Sycamore community to a plot of land donated by Brad Martin in Tompken Bottom in Gallatin; Brad Martin's son, Matthew Martin, had served as a pastor at St. Luke; and

WHEREAS, The present St. Luke African Methodist Episcopal Church site was purchased in 1908; when a concrete building was built on the site, St. Luke became known as "the concrete church"; in 1939, under the guidance of Reverend J.W. Chavers, and trustees R.J. Young, O. Brown, and Andrew Blakemore, the concrete building was replaced with a wooden frame church; and

WHEREAS, During St. Luke's illustrious history, the church has been blessed with a number of remarkable ministers; one such pastor was Reverend Samuel Solomon Morris, who was elected the 89<sup>th</sup> Bishop of the African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.) Church in 1972; and

WHEREAS, On November 18, 1951, Reverend M.H. Johnson began his illustrious service as Pastor of St. Luke African Methodist Episcopal Church; during his exceptional tenure, St. Luke erected the parsonage on North Blythe Street; dedicated on March 30, 1952, the parsonage was built of salvaged materials from the old abandoned A.M.E. Church at Gravel Hill; and

WHEREAS, Under the outstanding leadership of Reverend L.W. Johnson, St. Luke achieved, in addition to spiritual growth, great structural improvements; in 1963, Reverend Johnson was named pastor, and, in the fall of 1972, he and the dedicated members of St. Luke put forth creativity and faith in God to make St. Luke a comfortable place to worship; after much hard work and many prayers, Reverend Johnson, the Building Committee, and the congregation celebrated, at a rededication service held on November 25, 1973, the completion of the

remodeling; during Reverend L.W. Johnson's twenty-three-year tenure, the church also began purchasing additional land for future expansion; and

WHEREAS, In 1986, the Reverend James Howard Stowe, Sr. accepted the position of Pastor of St. Luke African Methodist Episcopal Church; under his astute leadership, the church continued working on its spiritual and structural expansion; and

WHEREAS, The Reverend Louis C. Adkins was named pastor of St. Luke in March of 1994; during his distinguished service, the church purchased more land and became debt free, paying off all mortgage debt and loans; continuing his admirable service as Pastor until his death in 1999, Reverend Adkins was assisted by Reverend Morgan Norvell when his health failed; following Reverend Adkins's death, St. Luke was led by Reverend Kevin Brookings for a short period of time; and

WHEREAS, As the congregation of St. Luke African Methodist Episcopal Church celebrates the joyous occasion of their one hundred and thirty-fifth anniversary, they are taking great delight in the new leadership of Reverend Barry Cox; Pastor of St. Luke for approximately two months, Reverend Cox has energized the church with his dynamic sermons and love and praise of the Lord; and

WHEREAS, The good people of St. Luke have significantly contributed to the social, cultural, and spiritual vitality of the Gallatin area, honorably and enthusiastically putting service to the Lord above all else; and

WHEREAS, St. Luke African Methodist Episcopal Church, its pastor, and its faithful congregation are continuing their path of joyous and committed service to God and their community, building on the record of the past one hundred and thirty-five years, looking to the future with hope and confidence, and always growing in spirit, stewardship, and ministry; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED SECOND GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE

CONCURRING, That we honor the past and present congregation and pastors of the St. Luke African Methodist Episcopal Church for their service to God, their community, and to this State, and extend to the present congregation and pastor, Reverend Barry Cox, our best wishes, as they celebrate the church's one hundred and thirty-fifth anniversary; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.